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Twenty-Eighth Report

COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF THE VIETNAM AND LAOS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

(This report covers the period from
28 August through 4 September 1973)

*This memorandum has been prepared jointly by the
Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.*

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5 September 1973
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5 September 1973

Twenty-Eighth Report

COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF THE VIETNAM AND LAOS
SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS*

(This report covers the week from
28 August through 4 September 1973)

The Key Points

- No new southbound infiltration of North Vietnamese personnel was detected during the week.
- North Vietnamese logistic activity continued to be high in northern South Vietnam, but was at low rainy season levels elsewhere.
- Communist regular military forces in South Vietnam grew slightly to an estimated 276,000 troops between early July and the end of August. Most Communist units in South Vietnam are now closer to full strength than they have been at any time since their peak levels of 1972.
- North Vietnamese road building and improvement efforts continue, both in Communist-controlled areas of South Vietnam and in southern Laos. The scope of these efforts strongly suggests that Hanoi plans major logistic operations to the south in the coming dry season.
- Combat activity in both South Vietnam and Laos remained at a low level during the week.

* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

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The Details

NOTE: This is the twenty-eighth in a series of memoranda summarizing evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military materiel toward and into South Vietnam, (II) Communist-initiated combat activity in violation of the Vietnam and Laos settlement agreements, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina. As with previous issues, we have prepared sections I and II of this memorandum in sterilized form in order to minimize the risk of source exposure if parts of the memorandum are used outside U.S. Government channels. For U.S. eyes only, we have appended a listing of specific sources to sections I and II at ANNEX A. Section III of the report has not been sterilized. Its contents should be held within the U.S. Government, and within the proper channels for material so classified.

I. Infiltration and Redeployments of North Vietnamese Personnel and Military Supplies

A. Personnel Infiltration and Redeployments

1. During the past week, no new North Vietnamese combat troops or specialists were detected infiltrating toward the South. Since the 15 June "second" ceasefire, more than 7,000 North Vietnamese personnel--some three-quarters of which were combat troops--have been detected starting the infiltration journey southward. Since the original ceasefire agreement of 27 January, over 57,000 personnel have moved through the infiltration pipeline. Of these, more than 32,000 started the trek since 27 January, while about 25,000 were in the pipeline moving southward as of that date. (ANNEX B, for U.S. eyes only, contains a more detailed discussion of the information pertaining to infiltration which was received during the past week.)

2. Recent evidence indicates the presence of a new North Vietnamese artillery regiment in northern South Vietnam. The origin of the unit, however,

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is unclear. It could have been formed from existing units within South Vietnam or from the large number of artillery personnel which arrived in infiltration groups in South Vietnam after the ceasefire, but it also could have recently entered South Vietnam undetected as an organic unit.

B. Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies

North Vietnam

3. Heavy typhoon rains brought supply movements virtually to a halt this past week in the Vinh area of the North Vietnamese Panhandle. As early as 23 August NVA logistics units near Vinh were observed taking precautionary actions against the storm. Units which had cargo in low-lying areas were ordered to move to higher ground to prevent flood damage. Although some flooding took place, no serious losses were reported.

4. Despite heavy rains in the southern Panhandle between Quang Khe and the DMZ, moderate logistic activity continued, including the movement of substantial quantities of ammunition. On 23 August about 475 tons of cargo, including over 100 tons of ordnance, were detected moving southward to storage areas in Quang Binh Province. During the period 25-29 August, at least 65 trucks carrying weapons and various types of ammunition moved through Quang Binh Province, [REDACTED]. In addition, another 69 trucks with unspecified cargo also transited the area during this period. Finally, between 26 and 29 August, some 150 tons of cargo, including at least 60 tons of ammunition, were transferred southward on barges between storage areas in Quang Binh Province.

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Laos and Cambodia

5. Heavy rains throughout Laos continue to inhibit supply movements severely, and the only recent logistic activity observed has been associated with road repair and local resupply. On 28 August

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25X1C roads in the Sam Neua area of northern Laos were impassable because of flooding, and logistic units were reportedly spreading rocks over the roads in an effort to return them to usable condition. Similar reports were received from southern Laos where [REDACTED] portions of Route 99, the main road between Muong Nong and Ban Bac, had become a quagmire and that high water levels at bridges and fords were making crossing extremely hazardous or impossible. (The map on the following page shows the roads and route numbers which are mentioned in this memorandum.)

South Vietnam

25X1C 6. Ever since the beginning of 1973, NVA logistic activity has been heavy in northern South Vietnam, and the past several weeks have been no exception. On 24 August, 97 vehicles were active along Route 9 in Quang Tri Province. Four days later on 28 August, 163 cargo vehicles were observed in the Cua Viet River area and 33 cargo vehicles were noted along Route 6089 southwest of Khe Sanh.

25X1C [REDACTED] on 30 August some 1,650-2,000 tons of rice were to be transferred from an NVA storage area along Route 9 to a storage depot along the western supply corridor. [REDACTED]

25X1C [REDACTED] 2,750 tons of cargo were scheduled to enter Dong Ha during September.

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7. Logistic activity all along the Communists' western supply corridor inside South Vietnam continued to be heavy. On 25 August over 500 tons of cargo, mostly foodstuffs, were moving at various locations along this corridor. On 28 August, some 660 vehicles were observed carrying supplies between two storage areas located on the corridor. Also on 28 August, a major logistics unit in the area reportedly had 650 tons of POL in storage. On 30 August, another 230 vehicles were noted active along the corridor.

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II. Communist-Initiated Combat Activity in South Vietnam and Laos

A. South Vietnam

8. In South Vietnam, the total number of communist-initiated ceasefire violations reported by the South Vietnamese Armed Forces since 27 January, 15 June, and for the last week (28 Aug-4 Sep) are shown below:

<u>Military Region</u>	<u>Total Since 27 January Ceasefire</u>		<u>Total Since 15 June Ceasefire</u>		<u>Last Week (28 Aug-4 Sep)</u>	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
MR 1	1,217	4,213	192	854	44	127
MR 2	446	3,066	182	1,212	17	100
MR 3	525	3,672	123	1,096	10	91
MR 4	928	8,545	250	2,379	26	212
Totals	3,116	19,496	747	5,541	97 (87)	530 (469) <u>1/</u>

1/ Denotes totals of previous week.

9. Some of these violations may have been initiated by GVN forces rather than communist forces, and it is impossible in all cases to determine the actual instigator. The table above and the charts on the following pages, however, do show fairly accurately the trend in the amount of combat that has occurred in South Vietnam since the ceasefire. The fact that a combat incident occurred at a particular time and place is generally reported accurately by the South Vietnamese, even though the question of who started it may not always be treated in objective fashion.

B. Laos

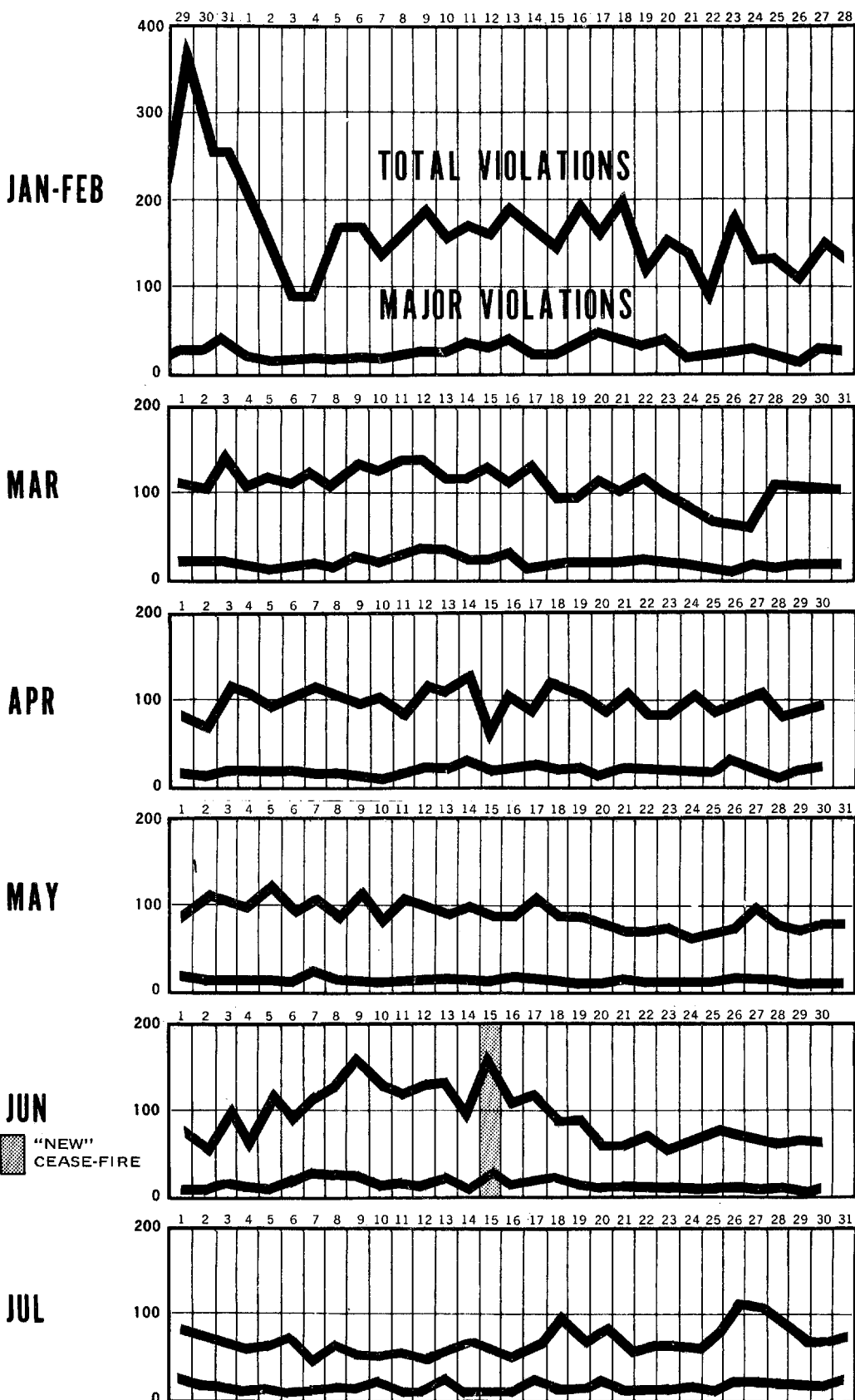
10. Communist-initiated combat activity continued at a very low level during the reporting period.

(See Reverse Side of Page)



CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS REPORTED BY RVNAF

(28 JANUARY THROUGH 31 JULY 1973)

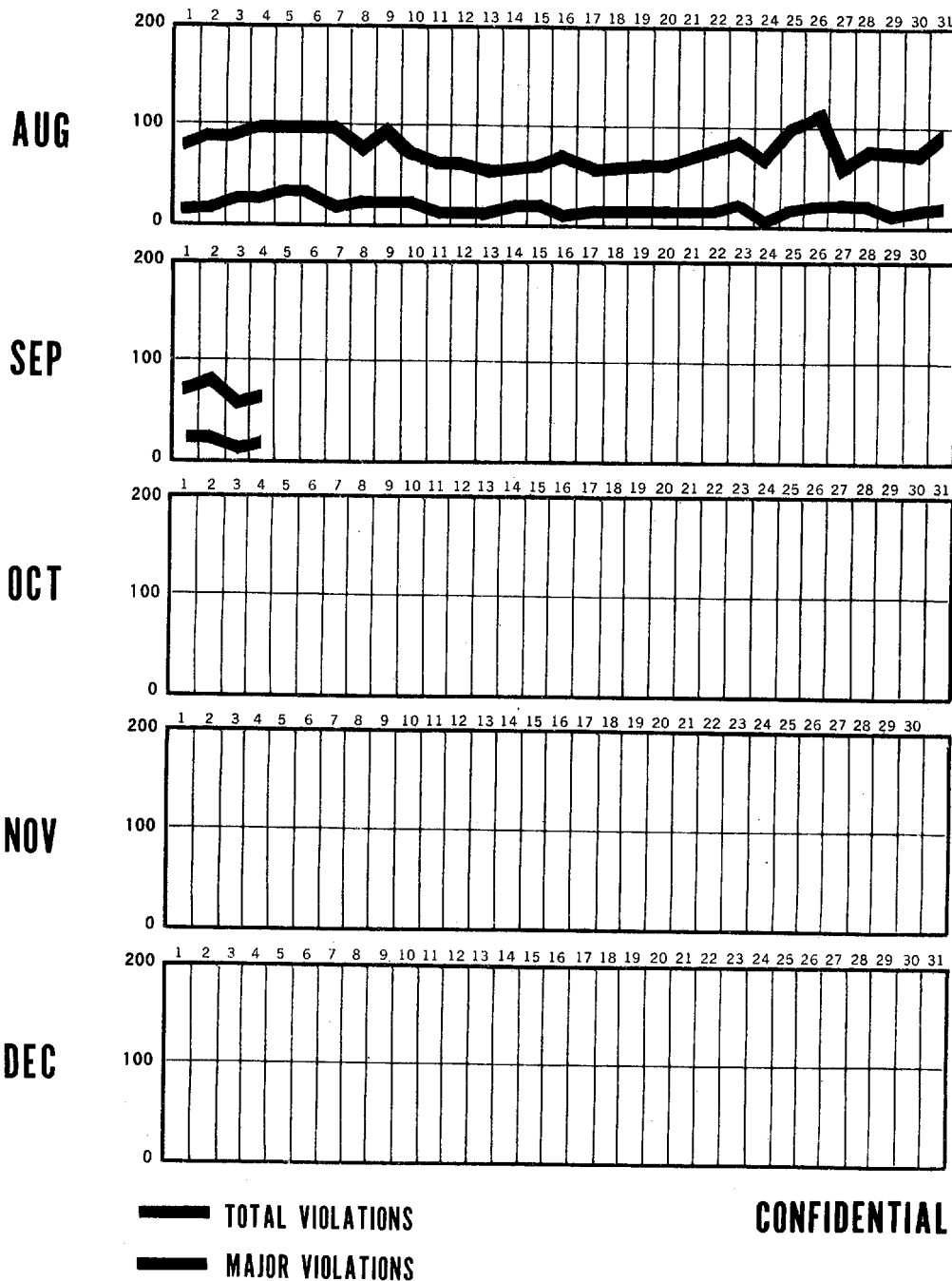


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CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS REPORTED BY RVNAF

(1 AUGUST 1973 TO THE PRESENT)



III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina

A. Changes in the Communist Military Force Structure in South Vietnam between 10 July and the Present

11. Since early July, the total strength of VC/NVA combat and administrative services troops in South Vietnam is estimated to have increased from 268,000 to 276,000 men. All of the increase has occurred in the combat forces; the size of the administrative service forces remains unchanged. The table below shows our current enemy order-of-battle estimate for South Vietnam.

CIA/DIA Order of Battle of Communist
Military Forces in South Vietnam
(in thousands)

	<u>31 August 1973*</u>
Regular Combat Forces	<u>180</u>
NVA	152
VC	28
Administrative Services	<u>96</u>
NVA	53
VC	43
Total	<u>276</u>
NVA	205
VC	71

* For a discussion of changes in Communist military forces in South Vietnam between 27 January and early July, see the twenty-second weekly violations report, dated 24 July 1973.

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12. The net increase of 8,000 VC/NVA combat troops in South Vietnam in the last two months took place despite the fact that we have reduced our estimate of NVA combat forces in GVN MR 1 by four combat regiments--the equivalent of some 6,000 men.* Recent analysis indicates that these regiments returned undetected to North Vietnam sometime earlier this year. This 6,000 man reduction in the Communist force structure is more than offset, however, by a counterbalancing 14,000 man increase in our strength estimate of the remaining Communist units in South Vietnam. The main factors accounting for the increase are (a) the recent detection of the NVA 78th Artillery Regiment in northern GVN MR 1, (b) the inclusion of additional North Vietnamese infiltrators as replacements in Communist combat units, and (c) evidence from prisoners, ralliers and captured documents indicating that most major Communist combat units are now closer to full strength than they have been at any time since their peak levels of 1972. As the table shows, almost 75 percent--or some 205,000 men--of the Communist regular forces now in South Vietnam are North Vietnamese rather than Viet Cong. The map on the next page shows the distribution of Communist, as well as South Vietnamese, combat personnel by military region. (Administrative Service forces are not included on the map.)

B. Communist Road Construction in South Vietnam, Southern Laos, and North Vietnam

13. Analysis of [REDACTED] South Vietnam and southern Laos in July and early August indicates that Communist road improvement and construction has been continuing at a steady--but not all-out--pace. Major emphasis continues to be on three road systems: the Route 14 - "Western Supply Corridor" system in South Vietnam, an east-west route across southern MR 1, and an as yet

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* The regiments involved are the 58th Artillery Regiment of the NVA 308th Division and the three infantry regiments--the 141st, the 165th and the 209th--of the NVA 312th Division.

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Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

<i>VC/NVA</i> ¹	<i>RVNAF</i> ²	<i>VC/NVA</i>	<i>RVNAF</i>
180,000	287,000	86,000	85,000
		325th	VNMC
		324B	Airborne
		320B	1st
		304th	2nd
		711th	3rd
		2nd	Regional Forces

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. Revised RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes present for duty personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions.

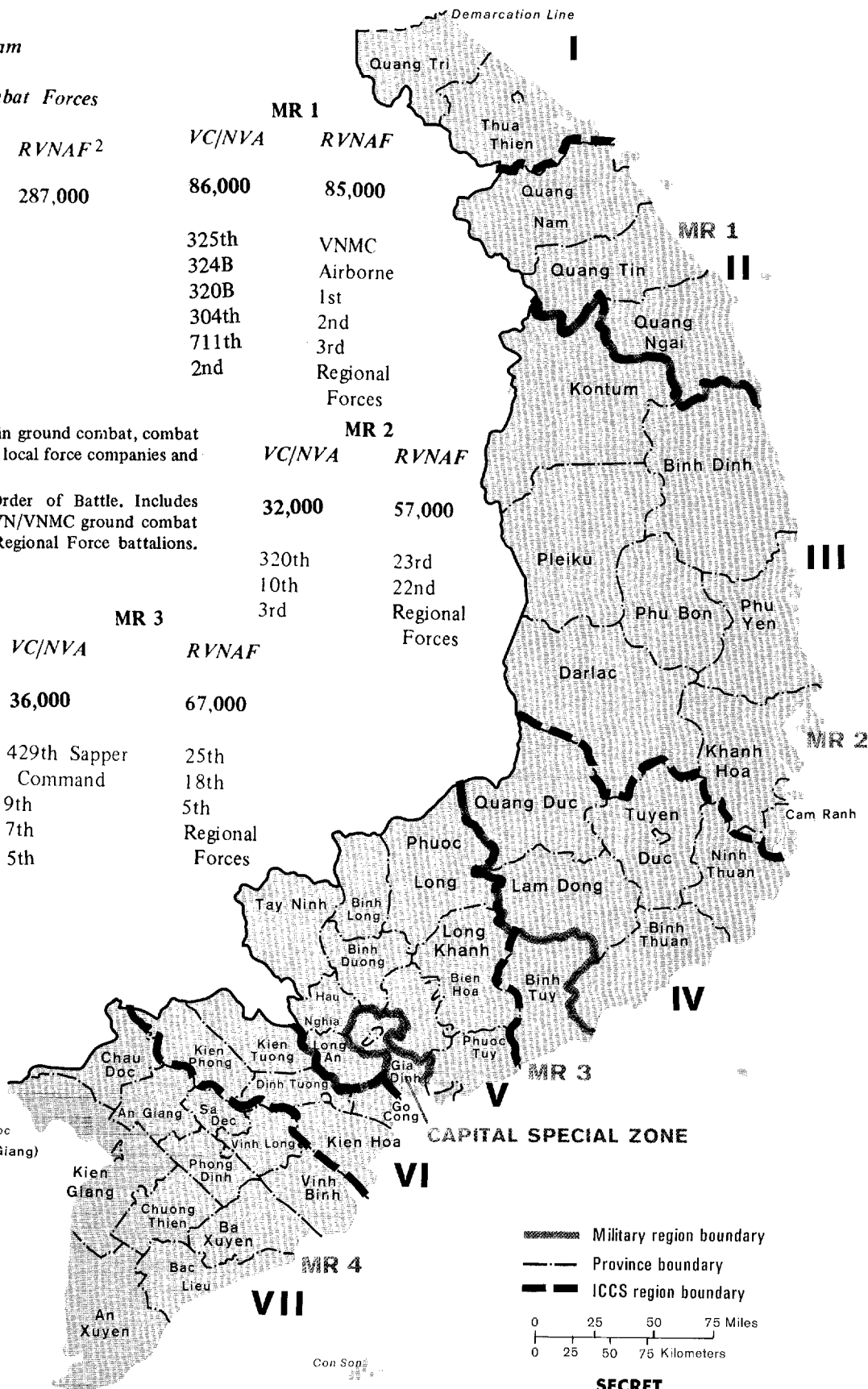
<i>VC/NVA</i>	<i>RVNAF</i>
32,000	57,000
320th	23rd
10th	22nd
3rd	Regional Forces

MR 3

<i>VC/NVA</i>	<i>RVNAF</i>
36,000	67,000
429th Sapper Command	25th
9th	18th
7th	5th
5th	Regional Forces

MR 4

<i>VC/NVA</i>	<i>RVNAF</i>
26,000	78,000
1st	21st
	9th
	7th
	44th Special Tactical Zone
	Regional Forces



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undesigned north-south route through the Laos Pan-handle. (The map following page 4 shows this new road construction and improvement work.) Since June, about 10 miles have been added to the central and southern portions of the Route 14 system--south of A Shau and within Kontum and Darlac Provinces. A gap totaling 30 miles still remains in the tri-border region, but the road is now motorable from the DMZ to Kontum Province. From the tri-border region, a new motorable road already extends southward through western Pleiku into Darlac Province. Much of this new road, however, appears to be an access route used mainly by construction personnel and machinery, and not yet by through traffic.

14. Also since June, some 38 miles of new or improved roadbed has been added to the east-west corridor cutting across southern MR 1 to Route 966 in Laos. With this most recent construction, the Communists now have a route built since early this year extending over 100 miles eastward from the Laos border to within 15 miles of the GVN coast. The new construction provides the Communists with a logistic corridor extending nearly the entire width of South Vietnam in southern MR 1--an asset that they lacked during last year's offensive. If used for military purposes, the corridor would facilitate the deployment of armor and artillery to points well within range of key targets along the coast.

15. In southern Laos, road improvement work on a major north-south route is still incomplete, but is progressing at more than a dozen sites. The [REDACTED] about 55 miles of new road has been cleared in different areas since June, and the total new construction now covers about one third of the distance between the major entry points from North Vietnam into Laos and the probable terminus of the new road on the Cambodian border. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] extensive road construction underway along the Mu Gia and Ban Karai Pass access routes within North Vietnam. Both of these logistic corridors join the new north-south corridor

through the Laos Panhandle. Construction work appears to be more extensive along route 15 near the Mu Gia pass, with some 22 miles of upgrading underway between the Bai Duc Thon logistic center and the Laos border. Near the Ban Karai Pass, early stages of road clearing were observed along on a five mile segment of route 137 near the border. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the North Vietnamese intend to make a substantial transportation effort into and through southern Laos during the coming dry season.

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ANNEX A

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Paragraphs 8 through 10: These paragraphs, which list reports of Communist-initiated fighting inside South Vietnam and Laos in violation of the ceasefire, [REDACTED]

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In the case of South Vietnam they are almost exclusively derived from reporting of the South Vietnamese armed forces and may be subject to the biases inherent in RVNAF reporting at the present time. In the case of Laos, most of the reporting on combat violations comes from Laos Government commanders who pass the information to American officials at the Military Region Headquarters level. In any case, there is no particular security problem associated with using the information in these paragraphs in discussions with the North Vietnamese.

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ANNEX B

Post-Ceasefire Infiltration of North Vietnamese
Personnel to the South

1. No new combat or special-purpose infiltration groups were detected in the pipeline during the past week. During the two month period of July and August 1973, less than 6,000 North Vietnamese personnel, including some 4,600 combat troops, traveled southward. Nearly three-quarters (3,100) of the combat troops traveled to VC Military Region 5 on South Vietnam's central coast, to strengthen Communist combat units there. A number of NVA/VC units in this area, however, reportedly still remain understrength. Only 9,000 infiltrators traveled to MR 5 during the 1972/73 dry season cycle--fewer than to any other area of Indochina--and this number probably was insufficient to replace the losses which occurred. The remaining 1,500 combat troops who started south in July and August traveled to southern Laos, where they probably were used to bolster NVA infantry units. As in the case of combat infiltration, most of the specialists who started south during July and August of this year infiltrated into VC MR 5.

2. Table 1, below, summarizes the southward movement of all North Vietnamese--including specialists--by month since January 1973.

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Table 1

Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Since 1 January 1973

	<u>Total^{1/}</u>	<u>Special-Purpose</u>
January	20,000	1,600
February	10,200	2,100
March	3,250	2,250
April	1,925	1,200
May	7,175	300
June	2,200	700
July	3,650	600
August	2,200	700
September 1-4	0	0

^{1/} Including gap-filled groups, except groups 7001-7009 and 5057. Assuming that these groups departed after 1 January, about 5,000 combat troops would be added to the infiltration starts shown above.

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